



## Spotlight: **CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH**

### Inside this issue:

<i>Child Abuse Prevention Month</i>	1-4
<i>Child Abuse Prevention: It's time to get back to being a village</i>	4
<i>Pinnwheels for Prevention Welcome Happy Anniversary</i>	5
<i>Kudos Korner</i>	6-7
<i>Save the Date Foster Parent Champions Contact Information</i>	8



Often times, when people hear the words “child abuse prevention” the concept conjures up thoughts about how to increase the likelihood that a child/youth never experiences abuse or neglect. Obviously, that’s what prevention is all about, right?

The Rock County Substitute Care unit thinks about child abuse prevention a little differently. We believe that our foster parents are instrumental in preventing abuse/neglect. HOW, you might ask? Well, if we told you that birth parent/foster parent connections prevent abuse/neglect, would you believe us? How about if you heard that directly from several of your foster parent colleagues?

The following quotes/comments come from foster parents who

developed great birth family connections and have maintained those connections post-reunification:

From Kayla and Andy Reigel:

Kayla shared that throughout their relationship with the birth parent, they have been able to be a connection for the birth mother. This includes being people that the birth mother can call when she has parenting questions, needs to vent about the stresses of being a parent, or needs general reassurances. Kayla shared that she and her family have been a “positive outlet” for the birth mother. This includes being a safe place for the birth mother to go instead of hanging out with people who may be negative influences in her life.

*(Continued on page 2)*

*Child Abuse Prevention (cont.)*

The family has invited the mother and her child to have dinner at their home following the child's reunification. They have also had game nights and allowed the children to spend time playing together. In addition, Kayla and Andy have also offered informal respite to the mother, to allow her a break for herself as well as providing a time for her to get some of her own things accomplished. These breaks have been sporadic with no expectations, however, the two families have kept in contact in between the breaks through calls, texts, and Facebook.

Kayla shared that she believes that from the start of the child's placement, they maintained an open and honest relationship with the mother. They also took an interest in the mother, encouraging her to share her own story with them. Kayla feels that this was important as the birth mother felt that she was seen as a person and not just as the mother of a child in foster care. Kayla also feels that this allowed the mother to feel that they accepted her for who she is. In addition, Kayla and Andy have demonstrated throughout placement and after reunification that they respect the birth mother in her role of mom. During placement they often talked with the mother about her

wishes for her child and tried to follow them within reason. Following reunification, they have given some gentle nudges regarding general parenting advice, but in no way force their opinions onto the mother.

Since reunification, Kayla and Andy have seen the mother and the child continue to make progress. They have watched the mother think things through and make plans for her further. Kayla shared that in general, they just try to be friends to the mother, doing things that they would do for other friends.

From Joseph and Steven Russell:

To fully accept a child into your home you have to acknowledge all that they are and that includes their bio family. It's so easy to say the bio parents are mean and don't know what they're doing and the child is lucky to have us but in reality we don't really know what happened, we were not there. Building that relationship with the extended family is monumental and yes I said extended family because when a child can see that you all are on the same page that speaks volumes. I believe a turning point for foster and bio parents is when the bio parents realize that you have nothing but the best intentions for their child and are not trying to take their children from them. It's not an easy road but it's a journey worth taking.

We have no regrets for all the ups and downs and heartache that comes with this calling.

Being able to maintain a positive relationship with birth families of course helps us continue to be involved in what the kids (that went back home) are doing and we want to have contact with them. It's been important to be a listening ear for the bio mom we have worked closely with, and it helps to know where she is at and how everything is effecting the kids. We've been able to be not only a listening ear but also given help and suggestions. It took a long time to get to this point, but now it's like we're a second family – it's a two way street where we both get something out of having a relationship. I think of it like grandparents – they make sacrifices so even if it's not a good time and bio mom asks us to take the kids, we do so b/c anytime we get to see them, it's good. We've learned to not take what bio parents say in a bad way, and we try to understand and be an outside support.

From Jamie and Scott Stoltz:

Bio mom doesn't have anyone else so if we can give mom respite so she can get a break and relax and de-stress, there's no greater gift than that. We have built the relationship with her. We have asked her to join

*(Continued on page 3)*

*Child Abuse Prevention (cont.)*

us for things like ice cream and dinner and she can see that her kids were placed in a good home when they were in foster care and she trusts us to continue to have them in our home. Mom is so appreciative and we want to stay in each other's lives. When I had the mindset that the kids were going home it was easier to build a relationship with their mom and work on open communication in order to help the kids transition back to their mom easier.

We knew the kids were going back and we want to make sure their family knew we cared and they are part of our lives and we love them.

From Theresa and Jon Jensen:

Maintaining a relationship with the birth parents is a wonderful thing for all involved. The kids get the benefit of your love and knowledge and the parents get some good role modeling. A positive benefit is the parents know you are there for them if they are getting stressed out and need a short break. The kids see adults working together for their best interests. The joy and happiness on their faces when you see them is priceless.

We have always tried to have an active and interactive relationship

with the birth parents and extended families of the kids who have come through our house. We have had the BPs and their families in our house for birthday parties, weekend cookouts and dinners, and holiday celebrations, gone to their houses for the same, and invited them to come along on our fun-time trips. We always make a point of doing this while the kids are in our house, **and** after reunification because the best interests of the kids is what is most important, and it is very important for the kiddos to see that **all** the adults in their lives can get along, that ours is not an adversarial relationship.

It also helps the BPs to see the behaviors and strategies they are learning about in their parenting classes **in action**. By modeling good parenting skills, we can help the BPs see that those strategies are effective, and not so hard to do if you stick with them. This also helps the kids adjust when reunification happens because they learn that the rules and expectations of them are consistent, regardless of where they are.

Doing things together as a "family" helps the kids reconnect with their BPs because it gives them an opportunity to spend time together on "neutral ground", away from the stressors and triggers that may still be present in the home environment. It is a safe way for them to learn how to be with their BPs without

some of those other distractions.

After reunification, maintaining a friendly relationship with mom/dad makes it easy to offer to help out with the kids when the BPs need a little break. This respite with a familiar caregiver home just might help diffuse a situation that may have escalated otherwise.

And finally, maintaining that relationship, and offering to help out whenever needed, gives us a chance to stay in the lives of kids we have grown to love. You can't help yourself falling in love with these kids when they come into your home; that doesn't stop just because the kids have returned to the BP's home. Having a good relationship with the BPs allows us to get that kiddo "fix" we need!

From Amanda and Shane Barlass:

When we decided to become foster parents, it was because we wanted to be parents! Just because these kiddos have returned home or have been placed with relatives it doesn't mean we no longer care about them or their well-being. By building and maintaining these relationships we are able to continue to support and love the kiddos.

Sometimes it's as often as a phone call a couple times a week;

(Continued on page 4)

*Child Abuse Prevention (cont.)*

weekend respite once a month; or getting together for a special occasion every couple of months.

We have been very fortunate in the fact that we still have a relationship with all of the kiddos who have filled our home and hearts with so much joy. Whether we are still Mama Amanda and Daddy Shane or have taken on the role of aunt and uncle or simply friends, our doors and arms have remained open. It hasn't always been easy, but the reward has always been worth it.

In closing, we hope you can see that the birth family connections that foster parents maintain once children leave their care is some of the best “prevention medicine” there is!!

A couple other items....

#### A REMINDER FOR AFTER-HOURS CONTACTS

If you need to contact the CPS Afterhours worker, please use the non-emergency Dispatch number—(608) 757-2244. Provide your name and contact number to the Dispatcher and they will route your call to the worker. Because you are calling Dispatch you will always be speaking to someone. Under no circumstances should you be routed to a voicemail. If that happens, you have dialed a WRONG number!! :(

*Child Abuse Prevention: It's time to get back to being a village*

Much of my early social work profession was shaped by my experiences working with the St. Croix Tribe located in northwest Wisconsin. The St. Croix Tribal culture, despite extreme poverty and generations of trauma, took great pride in caring for each other. Families and tribal elders had a deep commitment to the concept of “it takes a village to raise a tribal child.” Despite the tribes challenges with alcohol and drug abuse, the value of caring for your neighbor was present everywhere I went in the tribal community. The sense of tribal community is a path for how our local neighborhoods and communities can begin to work on preventing child abuse here in Rock County.

Prevent Child Abuse America suggests that child abuse prevention is the process of proactively cultivating positive cultures, leading to a better future for children and their families. To create this future everyone needs to challenge their views on the importance of child abuse prevention. The conversation happens regularly about intervening when

child abuse occurs and what should or should not be done. However, the system is far more reactive and must be combined with communities becoming active participants in creating positive cultures where families are safe and feel supported. Communities, by their nature, want the best for their children and the families. Unfortunately, there is far too much negative talk about young people and parents today. As an alternative, a simple act of shifting conversations with the people you know in a way that brings about support and collective responsibility for the health and well-being of families can spark a change. Start talking about positive parenting practices and healthy coping skills. Talk about the need for children to be involved in positive activities and how every child needs at least one positive, ongoing, role model in their life. Talk about the need for getting help when feeling depressed or struggling with anxiety. I believe through talking about this issue it will lead to action and making child abuse prevention a priority in Rock County.

Lance Horozewski




**April is National  
Child Abuse Prevention Month**

# Pinwheels for Prevention

**Saturday, April 6th  
at 11:00am**


**Rock County Courthouse - 51 S Main St, Janesville  
Lower Courthouse Park**

Come join us as we plant over 3,000 blue pinwheels  
- one for every child abuse or neglect report Rock  
County receives each year.

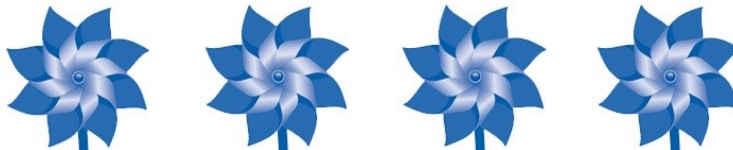


Pinwheels for Prevention is a  
nationwide public awareness  
campaign to engage  
communities in efforts to  
prevent child abuse and neglect.

Every April, CASA of Rock  
County plants a pinwheel  
garden in the courthouse lawn  
to symbolize innocence and the  
whimsical future all children  
deserve.



CASARockCounty.org Call (608)-305-0187 for more information



**Newly licensed foster homes:**

- Deborah & Daniel Weaver



Happy Anniversary to the following  
homes who were licensed in  
March/April

**3 Years**

- Kristina Simental
- Theresa & David Wixom

**5 Years**

- Stephanie Dachelet

**6 Years**

- Katie & Neil Lubke

**8 Years**

- Scott & Karen VanWyhe





Hope Daniels for your intuitiveness in recognizing and addressing the child's needs and advocating for treatment and services. Your determination and persistence led to early diagnosis and treatment which is an important step for the child's health and development. ~Sara Avalos

Kristina Simental for sticking with a placement through the lengthy ICPC process which prevented an additional move for the child. Also thank you for doing a great job partnering with the birth family and helping make the transition smooth.

~Sara Avalos

Whether a foster family or a biological family needs respite because of a vacation, needing a break, or an emergency, Amanda and Shane Barlass are always happy to help out – thank you! We appreciate your ability and your willingness to juggle multiple little ones, and being such a great support for so many people!

~Janet Hemauer

"Thanks!" never seems enough for the outstanding job that the Zielke foster home does! You've had some difficult challenges with your last round of placements. I appreciate your family's ability to "roll with it," while allowing the department to make the best case plan decisions, even if this means children are remaining in your home longer than the "emergency placement" timeframe. ~Tricia Stilen

Jamie and Scott Stoltz, you have a great way of looking on the positive side of your experiences even when they haven't turned out like you expected or hoped. You're gaining knowledge and experience and we appreciate your open communication, understanding, and connections with bio families, along with your sense of humor!

~Janet Hemauer

Schuhmacher home and Barlass home,

I want to take the time to thank Linda, Dan, Amanda and Shane for the time and effort they put in to help the little girl on my case load who just lost her mother. Your support with not only the child but each other has been amazing. You co-parent with not only each other but with the child's relative who takes the child for visits. The loss of the child's mother was hard for everyone involved but with the strong team approach this child has the best support team anyone could ask for!

~Kayce Wilson

To the Reigel Family...thanks so much for your on-going support of the Foster Care Program! Seeing you at Qdoba was awesome!!

~Tricia Stilen

Stephanie and Patrick Johnson, you have been ready for a first placement, and I am so impressed that while excited for a placement you are also careful about making a good match for your family. That is so important; thanks for being patient! ~Janet Hemauer

Amanda Barlass and Linda Schuhmacher worked together in a “joint custody” foster placement for a young child whose mother recently passed away. Amanda was her respite and placement provider; however, she did not have an opening for a placement. Linda had provided respite in the past to this young lady and Amanda and the child often spent time together. By being able to place her with Linda, this allows her to have access to Amanda frequently and has made a traumatic situation a little bit easier. Linda has also been amazing in providing photo albums and ordering items online to help this young lady process through her grief and loss of her mother. Amanda took her to her mother’s funeral with her ongoing worker present to allow her to be supported and have closure. The teamwork involved in this placement has been trauma focused and heartwarming to see. Thank you everyone that made this possible!

~Christie Wright

We say it all the time but it bears repeating. Thank you Laurie and Scott for being willing to take placements at any time, without any supplies, or information, as sometimes TPC’s aren’t always as smooth as we would like them to be. Thank you for saying “bring them over” and then providing immediate loving care to children who need that in that moment. Both Laurie and Scott dug in to make food, find clothes and diapers, allowing me to finish the paperwork as best as I could and let’s not forget how wonderful their children are in welcoming these children in so graciously and kindly. Thank you for being you! ~Christie Wright

Thank you to Courtney and Josh, who are a new foster home for taking a new placement on afterhours with open arms and creativity to ensure this young autistic man’s needs were met. The immediate contact via phone with his mother made a connection that helped this placement be successful and their creativity, flexibility, and welcoming atmosphere helped tremendously. Thank you to your daughter too for being a great tour guide, which seemed to be the best way for this young man to get acclimated. Thank you!

~Christie Wright

Hats off to Courtney Tompkins and Josh Bowers for the family focused approach you took with your first placement!! You mastered your first placement like pros! I look forward to seeing all of the great skills you have up your sleeves! ~Tricia Stilen

Special recognition to the Vetter foster home for providing diligent care to your long-term little girl! She has come so far! It’s heartwarming to see her smiles and hear her laughter!

~Tricia Stilen



Tenacity describes the Peterson foster home! Your perseverance in making sure that the children in your care get the services they need does not go unnoticed! I know that navigating the unknown can be frustrating, but you never give up! Thanks for all you do!

~Tricia Stilen



Foster Parent Appreciation Banquet

May 3, 2019

5:30—10:00 p.m.

More details to follow soon

### Classic Cruzers Car Club

Just for something a little different  
South Side Cruise in

June 8th  
July 13th

1900 Center Ave  
Rock County Job Center Parking Lot

Come on out  
And join the fun  
For an evening of  
Great People  
Great cars  
Great Times



Food Vendors  
will be present



Everybody is welcome  
Street Rods  
Imports  
Customs  
Trucks  
Bikes

Cruise in nights start  
at 5:00 PM and run until 9:00 PM

Please obey all traffic laws and clean up after yourself

## Culver's Scoopie Night! with the Rock County Foster Care Program



Stop by Culver's at  
2633 Milton Ave.  
Janesville, WI

Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>  
4-8pm

A portion of the sales will  
go to the  
Rock County Foster Care  
Program!

## Foster Parent Champions Contact Information

Laurie & Scott Zielke 608-561-6009

Joseph & Steven Russell 414-688-0716

Amanda Barlass 608-295-2320